Atemporality of fictive motion in coextension paths

This study demonstrates a peripheral role of time conceived as an object of perception (Langacker, 2008) in mental processing of fictive motion expressions (Matlock, 2004a, 2004b). More specifically, this study focuses on a specific category of fictive motion used for representation of static spatial configurations, which is referred to as coextension paths (Talmy 1996, 2000). Frequencies of language patterns found in the British National Corpus indicate that at the conceptual level coextension paths tend to be processed as atemporal expressions of spatial extension. An apparent absence of temporality in coextension paths can be attributed to the basic conceptual difference between static physical objects and force-dynamic events. Since space is fundamentally static and globally accessible in nature (Galton, 2011; Lanacker, 2012), language users are inclined to express fictive motion without reference to the temporal axis. The results indicate that there exist two cognitive modes of processing coextension path expressions.

Keywords: fictive motion, coextension paths, space, time, empirical linguistics

References

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